

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5464

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 8607

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT PGOV ET

SUBJECT: CONCLUSION OF PMAC CHAIRMAN'S TOUR

REF: A) ADDIS 8096; B) ADDIS 8510

1. PMAC CHAIRMAN BG TEFERI BANTE FINISHED 18-DAY TOUR OF SIDAMO, BALE AND HARARGHE PROVINCES. PURPOSE OF VISIT REPORTEDLY WAS TO ASSESS DROUGHT, MILITARY SITUATION AND PROGRESS IN DEVELOPMENT. ACCORDINGLY, TEFERI VISITED DROUGHT AREAS, PARTICULARLY WHERE SHELTERS AND FEEDING STATIONS ARE LOCATED, ALL MILITARY INSTALLATIONS OF ANY IMPORTANCE AND VARIOUS FACTORIES AND FARMS. PMAC CHAIRMAN ALSO SPOKE AT HARA ACADEMY GRADUATION (REF A).

2. PRESS MAKES NO MENTION OF ARREST OF GENERAL BERHANE TEFERA (REF B), APPARENTLY A MEMBER OF TEFERI'S ENTOURAGE. EMBASSY HAS REPORTS THAT TEFERI HIMSELF WAS TO HAVE BEEN ARRESTED IN DIRE DAWA AS PART OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN POLICE AND ARMY ELEMENTS TO ARREST PMAC CHAIRMAN AND POLICE COMMISSIONER. ARMY ELEMENT APPARENTLY FAILED TO CARRY OUT ITS PART OF THE BARGAIN, HOWEVER, WHICH RESULTED IN POLICE PLOTTERS RELEASING GENERAL BERHANE AFTER BRIEF
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DETENTION. EMBASSY ALSO HAS ONE UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT SOLDIER

IN HARAR FIRED ONE SHOT AT PMAC CHAIRMAN IN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AND WAS IMMEDIATELY GUNNED DOWN BY BODYGUARDS.

3. EMBASSY HAS SEVERAL REPORTS THAT MILITARY AND POLICE UNITS EXPRESSED DISSATISFACTION THAT BG TEFERI - "A MERE MESSENGER BOY" - WAS SENT IN PLACE OF PMAC VICE CHAIRMAN MENGISTU AND ATNAFU WHOM THEY HAD REQUESTED TO SEE. TEFERI WAS APPARENTLY TREATED WITH DISDAIN OR ELSE DISREGARDED. SEVERAL EYE-WITNESSES AT HARAR GRADUATION CEREMONY REPORTED THAT WHEN TEFERI COMMENCED HIS SPEECH, MANY MILITARY IN ATTENDANCE BEGAN TALKING AMONG THEMSELVES OR ELSE POINTEDLY WALKED OFF. OTHERS CONTEND THAT ONLY TEREFI'S WELL KNOWN "IMPOTENCE" ON POLICY MATTERS ACCOUNTED FOR HIS SAFE RETURN FROM TRIP - MANY DISSATISFIED MILITARY UNITS HAVING FELT IT POINTLESS TO MAKE A SHOW AGAINST HIS PERSON.

4. IN JULY 12 DIRE DAWA SPEECH PMAC CHAIRMAN AGAIN REITERATED THAT POLITICAL PARTY WILL BE FORMED. A DRAFT PROCLAMATION GOVERNING THE FUNCTION OF THE PROPOSED PARTY IS CURRENTLY BEING DRAWN UP. THE PROPOSED PARTY, ACCORDING TO PRESS, WILL EMBRACE FARMERS, WORKERS "AND OTHER PROGRESSIVE FORCES IN THE COUNTRY" AND WILL BE GUIDED BY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF ETHIOPIAN SOCIALISM. THE PARTY WILL REPORTEDLY "TAKE OVER THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COUNTRY AS SOON AS IT IS SET UP."

COMMENT: THE LAST SENTENCE ABOVE IMPLIES PARTY IF NOT NECESSARILY CIVILIAN RULE. INDEED THERE IS STREET TALK THAT THE DIRG INTENDS TO TURNOVER GOVERNMENT TO CIVILIANS ON SEPTEMBER 12 ANNIVERSARY OF OVERTHROW OF HAILE SELASSIE. THIS STILL SEEMS UNLIKELY TO US.
HUMMEL

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